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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KUWAIT 000808

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [KPAL](#) [PBTS](#) [KU](#)

SUBJECT: U/S JARALLAH: IRANIAN WHEEDLING, IRAQI DAWDLING,  
PALESTINIAN PLEADING

Classified By: Ambassador Deborah K. Jones for reasons 1.4 b and d

#### Summary

1. (C) During their July 15 meeting, Ambassador chided MFA U/S Khaled Al-Jarallah over Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Jassem Al-Khorafi's public criticism that USG policy toward Iran was "provocative," noting that now is not the time for irresponsible rhetoric. Al-Jarallah characterized as "very positive" the July 14 visit of Iranian MFA U/S Ali Redha Attar, who was received by the Amir. Attar reportedly assessed the P5 1 negotiations as 'positive' and offered Iran's analysis that war with the US is unlikely because the US military is overly extended in Iraq and Afghanistan, while Israel is distracted by domestic turmoil. Al-Jarallah lamented the GOI's perceived unresponsiveness to Kuwaiti overtures and outstanding issues such as relocating encroaching Iraqi farmers, settling on Green Zone property for the new Kuwaiti Embassy, and creating new facilities to ease the movement of commercial traffic. Al-Jarallah confirmed that \$80 million in aid to the Palestinian Authority would be disbursed through the World Bank's Trust Fund within ten days. End summary.

Parliament Speaker: "U.S. provoking Iran!"

2. (C) Ambassador opened the July 15 meeting with MFA U/S Al-Jarallah by expressing concern over local headlines quoting National Assembly Speaker Jassem Al-Khorafi as accusing the USG of "provoking" Iran. Now was not the time for irresponsible rhetoric, the Ambassador noted, but for serious diplomacy. Ambassador pondered aloud whether Al-Khorafi was speaking on behalf of the GOK and -- if so -- how such remarks by our friends might be received in Washington. Ambassador also provided Al-Jarallah with a copy of U/S Burns' recent remarks to the HFAC on our approach to Iran. (Note: This meeting preceded the announcement that U/S Burns would travel to Geneva to join the P5 1 talks. End note.)

Amir Receives "Positive" Message from Iranian MFA U/S Attar

3. (C) In turn, Al-Jarallah briefed Ambassador on the July 14 visit of Iranian MFA U/S Ali Redha Attar, who was received by the Amir and reportedly delivered an oral message from Ahmadinejad. Al-Jarallah characterized Attar's visit as "very positive" and aimed at relieving regional tensions and fears of pending war. Attar reportedly conveyed Iran's satisfaction with the P5 negotiations and offered Iran's assessment that "war was unlikely because the US military is

overly extended in Afghanistan and Iraq, while Israel is distracted by domestic turmoil." The press reported that the Amir "gladly accepted" Attar's official invitation to visit Iran, although Al-Jarallah made no mention of this.

#### Proposal for US Military Use of Abdaly-Safwan Crossing

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14. (C) Turning to Iraq, Ambassador conveyed a request from General Petraeus that US military be permitted limited use of the Abdaly-Safwan commercial crossing in support of Camp Bucca (in lieu of our earlier request that the GOK open an additional crossing at Bucca). Al-Jarallah was receptive but said further study was needed. (Note: Embassy sent a diplomatic note on July 14 via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Minister of Interior requesting permission to allow US military convoys to cross at Abdaly-Safwan with accompanying logistical details and maps. Results of this request to be reported septel. End note).

Al-Jarallah: "We are suffering from the Iraqis!"

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15. (C) Ambassador advised that former DAS Gordon Gray, who had served in Kuwait and was now in Baghdad, would be focused on facilitating progress on some of the outstanding issues between Kuwait and Iraq and would be visiting Kuwait July 21-23 for orientation. Al-Jarallah warmly welcomed this development. He complained that while Iraq had indeed paid the \$500K needed to establish and install the UN land border boundary markers (note: contrary to what the PM had

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suggested earlier to S/I Satterfield. End note.) the Iraqis had not responded to numerous GOK requests to come and maintain the boundary markers and to deal with other troublesome issues related to the border. Al-Jarallah complained the Iraqis were not "dependable:" the GOI had not been responsive regarding the relocating of Iraqi farmers who encroach on Kuwaiti land, despite Kuwait's offer to pay for new housing according to "five star" plans the GOI had drawn up; the GOI had yet to respond to a GOK request -- passed through the Iraqi Embassy here -- to purchase and refurbish five units in the Green Zone to house their diplomatic mission. Meanwhile, he said, the GOI was now entertaining a request from an Iraqi national to auction off the GOK's former properties, a Consulate in Basra and the former embassy in Jadriyah, with no discussion of compensation for the GOK (Note: a subsequent press report carried Iraqi government denial of this. End note); Finally, problems continued at Safwan, with Kuwaiti truckers delayed for hours in queues of "up to a thousand trucks," while the Iraqis shut down their customs and border operations at 1300 or 1400 in the afternoon. Al-Jarallah said the GOK had offered to pay for new facilities to ease the movement of commercial traffic but the GoI had been non-responsive.

16. (C) Ambassador asked whether any of these issues were a factor in the GOK's delay in sending its Ambassador to Iraq and al-Jarallah replied in the negative, "apart of course, for the delay in preparing secure facilities." Al-Jarallah also confirmed that debt relief would not be immediately forthcoming and suggested it would be dealt with along the lines of the deals worked out for the outstanding Kuwaiti Airlines claims, i.e. profit sharing commercial arrangements heavily weighted in favor of the Kuwaitis.

#### GOK to disburse \$80 million to Palestinian Authority

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17. (C) Ambassador asked whether there was not some way to expedite disbursement of Kuwait's \$80 million commitment through the World Bank Trust Fund. Al-Jarallah said Abu Mazen had reached out directly to the Kuwaitis in recent days and they had initiated payment, which -- according to Al-Jarallah -- would be completed within 10 days.

Al-Jarallah said the Kuwaitis were working directly with Abu Mazen's assistant, Majdi Al-Khalidi.

A New Lion in Damascus?  
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18. (C) Al-Jarallah cautiously extolled SARG President Bashar Al-Assad's new and developing role as a dealmaker in regional politics, wondering aloud if Al-Assad can effectively navigate the intricacies of working with Iran, Lebanon, Israel and Turkey. Al-Jarallah also expressed optimism that the new government in Lebanon will contribute to the stability of the country, and highlighted the important role that SARG must have in order to secure peace there, welcoming the reported restoration of diplomatic relations.

Comment  
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19. (C) The increased volume in Iranian rhetoric over a possible military confrontation with the US or Israel and its threats to shut down the Strait of Hormuz has produced high anxiety in this small and vulnerable regional neighbor. Kuwait believes it inevitably would suffer the fallout of these actions, whether collateral damage or direct attacks on US military assets here. Familiar with Iranian treachery and confident of USG reliability, the GOK unfortunately occasionally takes greater care with the coiled serpent than with the dependable eagle in its public remarks. Kuwaitis are relieved by US participation in the P5 1 process although political analysts here are already assessing that any negotiated settlement will increase Iranian influence at GCC expense. While Iraq remains a frustration and suspicions remain, our sense is that we are beginning to deal more with practical than political issues, particularly if the security improvements hold and PM Maliki maintains a perceptibly nationalist Iraqi (vice Shi'a) posture. As for Syria, the Kuwaitis have made no secret of their wish to wean it away from Iran's calculating bosom. They view Bashar Al-Assad's steps with Turkey and Israel as indicative of his ability to act independently of Tehran and have urged that we leave the

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path open for him to "find his way to us." End comment.

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